

Virginia HIV Community Planning Committee Meeting Summary

Members Present: Dan Alvarez, Odile Attiglah, Bill Briggs, Heather Bronson, Rhonda Callaham, Denise Clayborn, Dr. Rosalyn Cousar, Vontrida Custis, Hugo Delgado, Gregory Fordham, Richard Hall, Robert Hewitt, Martha Lees, Elaine Martin, Nicholas Mattsson, Robert Rigby, Ruth Royster, Edward Strickler, Bruce Taylor, Silvia Villacampa

Members Absent: Nathaniel Amos, Mark Baker, Tomas Cabrera (represented), Caroline Fuller, Girus Mekonnen (represented), Paul Searcy

Other Attendees: Kathleen Carter, Diana Jordan, Lindsey Mathews, and Shelley Taylor-Donahue of the Virginia Department of Health; Carrie Dolan, former member; Linwood Alford of Open Door Resources; Similes Bekele of Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. (representing Girus Mekonnen); Steven Hines of K.I. Services (representing Tomas Cabrera); Pat Garrett, guest; Carlos Velazquez and Javier von Westphalen of HMA Associates; Marco Aurita and Soroya Galeas of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD) Committee of Northern Virginia; Gloria McCall, guest

Total of 34 attendees.

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Elaine Martin at 8:30 AM.

Membership Update

- Ami Gandhi resigned her position as Community Planner on February 20th. She, her husband and new baby have relocated to Georgia to be closer to family. Ami did an outstanding job developing the *2008 Comprehensive HIV Prevention Plan* and coordinated many special projects. Recruitment for her position will be underway soon.
- Joseph Riddick resigned from the committee effective February 5, 2008. He is moving to Maine in the near future and hopes to continue working there in HIV prevention.
- Caroline Fuller is on maternity leave from her position at the Department of Education.
- Carrie Dolan has taken a position as a social epidemiologist at the Williamsburg Health Foundation. Her final day with the Division of Disease Prevention was February 29th.

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- Paul Searcy's membership will be terminated due to excessive absences. The vacancy this leaves on the membership committee will be addressed at the May meeting.

Old Business

- *Training: Use of Social Networks: A Recruitment Strategy for Counseling, Testing, and Referral Services* – On February 26-28th, sixteen community-based contractors completed the Division's first course. The response to the training was overwhelmingly positive.
- Carrie Dolan distributed copies of the *2007 HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Profile, HIV & AIDS in Virginia*. Carrie was instrumental in the development of the profile and was a key resource for data requests and epidemiologic presentations to the committee. Speaking on behalf of the entire committee, Elaine thanked Carrie for her hard work and wished her well in her new position at the Williamsburg Health Foundation.

New Business

- *New Health Commissioner* - Karen Remley, MD, MBA, FAAP, was appointed Health Commissioner effective January 22, 2008. Dr. Remley comes to VDH from Sentara Leigh Hospital where she served as Vice President of Medical Affairs. Prior to that she was the medical director for External Quality for Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia. She also has served as a faculty member teaching health care economics and global health to masters of public health students at Eastern Virginia Medical School.
- *2008 HIV Prevention Leadership Summit in Detroit* - Because Elaine still doesn't have the federal budget money for 2008, she may support only Dr. Rosalyn Cousar, Community Co-Chair, to attend this year.

Use of Social Networks as a Recruitment Strategy for CTR – Elaine Martin

Ms. Martin reported she is very enthusiastic about doing HIV counseling and testing in areas which are not usually thought of as high-risk, e.g. rural areas that don't have gay bars where high risk individuals congregate or areas without clinics. Social networking is based on the underlying theme that individuals in social networks (friends, partners, etc.) often share similar risk behaviors and trust each other. HIV positive or high-risk HIV negative individuals are enlisted and coached to bring their "network associates" in for HIV testing. Social networking was shown to increase positivity rates from under 1% to 6% in a nine-site national study funded by CDC. It has been effective in both urban and rural settings. Social networking focuses not on testing volume but testing the right people – those at high risk but who might not come in for services on their own or be found at typical testing venues.

Loss of SAPT Block Grant Funds – Denise Clayborn

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Ms. Clayborn reported on funding cuts at the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS), specifically the loss of the substance abuse treatment block grant which resulted from lower AIDS rates reported in Virginia. The federal government determined that DHRMSAS can no longer use federal funding to conduct HIV initiatives. DMHMRSAS had funded 23 projects through community services boards (CSB). Ms. Clayborn reported that the boards have mobilized efforts to reinstate the funding, and as a result some CSBs will be able to continue after June 2008 to use part of their grant money for HIV prevention.

HIV Prevention Strategies Utilizing the Internet – Bill Briggs

Mr. Briggs stated that internet outreach conducted at Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry (NOVAM) has been an effective means of reaching high-risk individuals, citing that on average 3-5 clients per week are contacting NOVAM after seeing its message on sites such as *Craig's List*, *Man Hunt*, and/or *In Spot*. He explained that *In Spot* is a web site where clients can log on to find out if someone they've hooked up with has posted information about his HIV or STD status. Bill showed ORION's profile on *Man Hunt* and suggested that the committee utilize internet outreach as a means of finding out what HIV prevention questions are being asked by individuals in their respective communities.

Stigma Campaign for Latinos – Carlos Velazquez

Mr. Velazquez, of HMA Associates in northern Virginia, presented on "Across the Life Span," a social marketing campaign focusing on stigma reduction. He began by explaining the differences between internalized and external stigma. He noted that perceptions are hard to counter because of prejudice and fear, and he cited how media coverage presents both harsh and positive images. He showed how a hierarchy of stigma exists, e.g. black gay men are criticized more harshly than white gay men, and explained how acculturation acts as a determinant of health.

Subcommittee Reports

► HIV, STD Integration and Testing – Reported by Martha Lees

Ms. Lees explained that the subcommittee's goal is collaboration, e.g. providing hepatitis B vaccine to those getting testing on HIV testing days. She also reported that before the next meeting on June 20th, subcommittee members will work on a survey to community-based organizations to find out what type, if any, STD messages/education are being given to clients (which is supposed to be part of their HIV prevention work). Questions received through the survey will be presented to the whole committee for review.

► Ryan White – reported by Shelley Taylor-Donahue

Topics presented for discussion were HIV prevention messages from physicians (Shelley will e-mail to Elaine for the distribution to the HSIT subcommittee), focus

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groups for HIV/AIDS eligibility, gaps between consumer/provider input, having definitive timelines to get data/results back to constituents in a way that is going to make sense to them, physically taking the results to CBOs, etc. to disseminate, and the April 4th Ryan White All Titles Meeting in Richmond.

Update on the Disclosure Assistance Services Campaign

Elaine reported that Arlington/Alexandria Health Districts were pilot sites for the DAS campaign which is intended to provide support to health department staff and private providers. A DAS page has been added to the Division's web page. She reported that new marketing materials will be returned soon from the printer and she will disseminate them at the May meeting.

Next Steps on the Call to Action

- ★ small two-sided cards with information to be placed at agencies
- ★ bus and newspaper ads
- ★ partnering with AA church and community leaders who expressed enthusiasm and interest at the faith-based training last month

Review of the September meeting summary

Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as written.

Planning for the May meeting

- 1) Standards & Practices and Research Subcommittees will meet
- 2) Elaine will distribute Disclosure Assistance materials
- 3) Vote to fill vacant position on Membership Committee

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Elaine Martin, Community Co-Chair

Date

Kathleen Carter, Recording Secretary

Date

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